A

LETTER

TO

GEORGE HARDINGE, Esq.

ON THE

SUBJECT of a PASSAGE

IN

Mr. STEVENS's PREFACE

TO HIS

IMPRESSION of SHAKESPEARE.

——————This even-handed juſtice
Commends the ingredients of our poiſon'd chalice
To our own lips. *SHAKESPEARE.*

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To the Right Honourable LORD DACRE.

My Lord,

AFTER the following Pages were written, I was informed, that it was with a view to the ſatisfaction of your Lordſhip, as well as that of the friend immediately addreſſed, that I had been ſolicited by him to put them together. They were fortunate enough to have your Lordſhip's approbation; and are now laid before the Public, in conſequence of the united advice of thoſe, who have read them.

As their purpoſe is to vindicate a worthy Character, from unjuſt aſperſions, I know not to whom they can be inſcribed, with more propriety than to your Lordſhip.

I have the honour to be, with the utmoſt reſpect,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt obliged, and obedient humble Servant,

The AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE reader who obſerves the difference between the date on the title page, and that which is prefixed to the following letter, may perhaps be induced to aſk; "Why was not it publiſhed be-"fore?" To give a direct and full anſwer to ſuch a queſtion, would be to enter into a detail of circumſtances, as trivial in themſelves, as they are unintereſting to the public. It is therefore ſufficient to ſay, that it was not written with a view to publication; but that having been read by many in private, the publication of it is now preſſed upon the writer, not only by his friend, whoſe partiality for him would have been ſuſpected and reſiſted, but by thoſe, whoſe opinion could not, with decency, be withſtood. To mention their names would indeed reflect no little degree of credit upon him; whether in reſpect of their rank, or judgment. It would alſo corroborate the ſanction, which the noble Lord, with whoſe name it is honoured, has thus given to what is inſcribed to him: But of that ſanction there can be little need. Accordingly they are ſuppreſſed; as well on this account, as to avoid the appearance of parade, and of giving an air of greater importance to the matter, than it might be thought by others to deſerve. Nor ſhould they have been alluded to, but that the writer thinks he ought not to omit making his public acknowledgments, for the favourable opinion conceived of him; and as he offers them with gratitude,

and ſincerity, he hopes they will be accepted; though preſented with leſs of ceremony than reſpect uſually obſerves, in ſuch caſes. With regard to his own name, he aſſures the reader, that the concealment of it is not to be attributed to a conſciouſneſs of any thing wrong, in what he has been doing. The defence of truth is not a matter to be aſhamed of. If that has received the ſupport, which was it's due; and ſhall, by his means, prevail againſt calumny; the end of his publication will be fully anſwered: The mention of an obſcure name could lend it but little aſſiſtance. Should the cauſe of *Shakeſpeare* eventually receive any ſervice from what he has done, ſuch an event would certainly be important; and, as that cauſe is moſt "native to his heart," it could not but afford him the higheſt ſatisfaction. Yet, even in that caſe, of what importance would it be to know by whoſe hand ſuch a ſervice had been adminiſtered? It might perhaps gratify curioſity; which at the ſame time, would ſcarce thank one for the information. For his own part, the reflection in private, that he had at all contributed to ſo deſirable an event, would be a full reward, for the utmoſt ſervice which he could ſuppoſe himſelf to have performed. And he would much rather forego the little degree of credit, which he might thought entitled to by ſome, than lay himſelf open to the cenſure of others, and thoſe perhaps among his friends; who might upbraid him with miſ-ſpending that time, which is dedicated to other purpoſes; or might blame his forwardneſs, for interfering in a matter which did not immediately concern him.

To ſuch friends, ſhould they at any time hereafter diſcover him, he begs leave to ſay, that he hopes the vindication of worth from unjuſt reflections, in whatever cauſe, cannot properly be called an ill

ill employment: nay that with ſuch an end in view, he might juſtify the allotment of a larger portion of his time to it, than has been employed upon the preſent occaſion. For the other charge, he muſt confeſs, that he is indeed a ſtranger to the gentlemen, between whom he has taken the liberty to interfere; and that their perſons are unknown to him, at this hour. Yet the old apology of "*Homo ſum*, &c." may perhaps be allowed him; if not, he muſt then repeat, that had it not been for the reaſon already given, this letter ſhould never, by the writer's deſire, have wander'd beyond the private circle, to which it was firſt directed,

September, 1774.

DEAR SIR,

TO examine, how far the charge advanced, by the laſt Editor of SHAKESPEARE, againſt his immediate predeceſſor, is well grounded, was the enquiry to which you ſolicited me: how long ago, I am almoſt aſhamed to own. But I have, at laſt, endeavoured to comply with your requeſt; and, if it may be any excuſe for the delay, have gone, as you may now ſee, a little farther than was at firſt propoſed. If I have delayed giving you the ſatisfaction which you deſired, much longer than you expected, I muſt inform you, that I could not immediately procure the books which were wanted, and that the examination of them took me up more time, than I foreſaw, when I acceded to your propoſal. And perhaps, at the firſt view of my packet, you will conclude that I have beſtowed more ink and paper on my ſubject, than it required, or deſerved; though of your impoſing. But if I have been as tedious as poor *Dogberry* himſelf, pardon me, I entreat you, for the ſake of the motive; and let ſome little allowance be made, for the nature of my ſubject. The detection of wrong is apt to lead one through tireſome, as well as foul paths; and often engages one in a longer purſuit, than would be undertaken for mere amuſement. And there are caſes, in which truth cannot be eſtabliſhed by any thing leſs, than a circumſtantial detail of all the evidence, that can be obtained.

If I could have thought that you would be contented, or that it would have anſwered your end to have been barely told the reſult of the evidence that I had collected, I would not have treſpaſſed beyond the uſual bounds

of a letter. But you intimated, that it was more to convince others, than to ſatisfy any doubts of your own, that you ſet me to work. What prejudices theſe friends of yours might have entertained, I could not be ſuppoſed to know: they might be ſuch as nothing ſhort of demonſtration would be capable of removing. And though they might have been directed where to find it, by reference to chapter and verſe, yet the books, in which it was to be found, might not be at hand; or if they were, the trouble of turning them over might be thought too great. I have therefore extracted and laid at once before you, if not all that they contain, yet as much as, I hope, will be ſufficient for your purpoſe. So that I will make no farther apology for my tedioufneſs, than the deſire I have to convince your friends; and to give them, and you, as little trouble as I can. And if, after all, I ſhould ſeem to have impoſed too heavy a taſk upon you, in the peruſal of ſuch a letter as this, (for it contains little more than a detail of dull matter of fact) I ſhall only ſay, or rather SHAKESPEARE, to whom you can refuſe nothing, ſhall ſay for me;

——————————" Of this allow,
" If ever you have ſpent time worſe e'er now:
" If never yet—then *Friendſhip's* ſelf doth ſay,
" He wiſhes earneſtly you never may."

But, not to add to the fault, for which I am apologizing, by an accumulation of more words prefatory and apologetical, than are neceſſary, I will come at once to the matter in hand, when I have tranſcribed the paſſage, to which you referred me, in the Advertiſement to the Reader, prefixed by *STEVENS* to his reviſal of *Dr. JOHNSON's* SHAKESPEARE. And it will be proper to lay this before you at full length, that the charge, which we are going to examine, may be ſeen at one view, and in its own dreſs.

" It will be expected (ſays Mr. STEVENS) that ſome notice ſhould be taken " of the laſt Editor of Shakeſpeare; and that his merits ſhould be eſti-

" mated

" mated with thoſe of his predeceſſors. Little, however, can be ſaid of " a work, to the completion of which, both the commentary, and a large " proportion of the various readings, are as yet wanting. *The Second Part* " *of King Henry VI.* is the only play from that edition, which has been con- " ſulted in the courſe of this work; for, as ſeveral paſſages there are arbi- " trarily omitted, and as no notice is given when other deviations are " made from the old copies, it was of little conſequence to examine any " further." (*a*)

Much may ſometimes be ſaid in few words. For however conciſe this account, and however ſlight the notice here taken of Mr. *CAPELL's* work may appear, at firſt view, it evidently contains a charge of ſuch a nature, as muſt alarm any reader, who had entertained a favourable opinion of Mr. CAPELL's character as an Editor. And ſuch an opinion one might reaſonably have contracted, (as I confeſs was my own caſe) from the praiſes beſtowed upon him by others, as well as from his own repeated declarations of his integrity.

Mr. *FARMER*, for inſtance, in his ingenious *ESSAY* on the *Learning* of SHAKESPEARE, (*b*) had with becoming zeal recommended Mr. CAPELL's work, before its appearance, to the notice of the public; by giving them an aſſurance of his friend's ability to perform what he had undertaken: the late republiſher of the *Oxford* SHAKESPEARE, who has printed a collation of the text, as it ſtands in his own edition, with that of *THEOBALD*, and of *CAPELL*, gives them jointly the character of the two moſt authentic editors of his author: and Mr. *PERCY* has borne full teſtimony to Mr. CAPELL's general character for accuracy, in the following words; " That we are able to give it, [the *Ballad* of the NOTBROWNE MAYD] " in a more correct manner, than almoſt any other poem in theſe volumes, " is owing to the great care and exactneſs of the accurate Editor of the

(*a*) *Advertiſement* to the Reader, p. 8.
(*b*) Pages 57 and 59, 2d edit. 1767.

" *Proluſions*;

" *Proluſions*; *(c)* who has formed the text from two copies found in two " different editions of *ARNOLDE's Chronicle.*———From the correct " copy in the *Proluſions* the following is printed, with a few additional " improvements gathered from another edition of *ARNOLDE's* book, " preſerved in the *public library* at *CAMBRIDGE.*———It does honour " to the critical ſagacity of that gentleman, that almoſt all his conjectural " readings are found to be the eſtabliſhed ones of this edition (*d*)." This edition, we are told in a note, is ſuppoſed, by a learned friend of the writer's, to be the firſt; and it authenticates no leſs than eleven, out of ſixteen, of Mr. CAPELL's conjectures.

Surely ſuch honourable and ample teſtimonies as theſe muſt raiſe our expectations of accuracy in an Editor, to a very high degree. Such praiſes might juſtify the moſt favourable opinion that could be formed of the perſon, on whom they are beſtowed; though he had not himſelf aſſerted his fidelity, and laid claim to the merit ariſing from it, in direct and plain terms, as Mr. CAPELL has, repeatedly, in the courſe of his *Introduction*; towards the concluſion of which, every particular voucher of that fidelity is collected into one point; that it may forcibly ſtrike the eye, which is there directed towards it, and cannot avoid ſeeing its object in full view. For though he had before drawn out at large the plan that he had purſued, in collating all former editions, ancient as well as modern, (of which he has given a very ample and preciſe account,) though he had pointed out the ſeveral ſteps by which he proceeded, in reviſing, and ſettling his author's text, in conſequence of that collation; and had diſtinctly ſhewn, by what marks every deviation from the old copies, however neceſſary, was diſtinguiſhed, and might at once be known; yet, as the reader's attention might poſſibly have been diverted from this principal object, by the intervention of various other matters, which he had thought it neceſſary to diſcuſs; he farther endeavours, with peculiar earneſtneſs, to refreſh his memory, and to impreſs it with what he moſt wiſhed to have obſerved, in the following words: " As we are deſirous, above all

(c) PROLUSIONS, or ſelect pieces of *antient Poetry*.—Publiſhed by Mr. CAPELL—Printed for *R.* and *J.* TONSON, 8vo. 1760.

(d) Vid. *RELIQUES* of *ancient Engliſh Poetry*, &c. vol. II. edit. II. 1767.

which

" things, to leave a ſtrong impreſſion upon him [the reader] of one merit " which it [his edition] may certainly pretend to, that is,---its fidelity; we " ſhall take leave to remind him, at parting, that---throughout all this " work, what is added without the authority of ſome ancient edition, is " printed in a black letter: what alter'd, and what thrown out, conſtantly " taken notice of; ſome few times in a note, where the matter was long " or of a complex nature; but more generally, at the bottom of the page, " where what is put out of the text, how minute and inſignificant ſoever, is " always to be met with; what alter'd, as conſtantly ſet down, and in " the proper words of that edition upon which the alteration is form'd: And " even in authoriz'd readings (adds he) whoever is deſirous of knowing fur- " ther, what edition is followed preferably to the others, may be gratify'd " too in that, by conſulting the various readings; which are now finiſh'd: " and will be publiſh'd together with the notes, in ſome other volumes, " with all the ſpeed that is convenient."*(e.)*

Theſe are very direct and explicit aſſertions. And who would not be led by them to expect a ſingular degree of preciſion? But if, after all, they contain but little truth, (as MR. STEVENS's charge implies) a detection of ſuch falſehood and deceit ſtrikes at the root of all confidence in editors; and readers may be juſtified from it in doubting whether any text may be admitted as genuine, but that which they receive immediately from its author's hand.

A charge of this nature, affecting an editor's character in the point, of which he ſeemed moſt jealous, and which he was moſt deſirous to maintain, certainly required ſome proof of it's juſtice. And to ſay the truth, a quarter is named, from which as we are told it may be collected. But how collected? No particular paſſages are pointed out; and muſt we collate every ſyllable of this play, to find them? Collation would, no doubt, be a certain method of bringing the matter to a fair iſſue; and would determine, between ſuch oppoſite aſſertions, which of them has the ſeal of

(e) Introduct: p. 48-9.

truth. But the bulk of readers will ſcarce plunge into the toil of collating; which editors have always repreſented to them as a moſt grievous taſk. And troubleſome it certainly muſt be to thoſe, who are not uſed to it; and who will therefore ſcarce think the queſtion intereſting enough to engage them in the labour neceſſary to determine it. But what then is to be done, and which ſide of the queſtion are we to take? without ſome enquiry of this kind, we ſuſpend all judgment and belief, or, what is infinitely worſe, and what juſtice forbids, condemn a man, without trial, merely becauſe another has boldly accuſed him; and diſbelieve his moſt poſitive aſſertions, becauſe they have been hardily contradicted.

If a reader ſhould however be found, who can ill brook, in any caſe, the irkſomeneſs of uncertainty and ſuſpenſe; much leſs where a character is concerned of which he had entertained the higheſt opinion; if he were ſanguine enough to undertake the taſk of enquiry, and had patience to go through with it, he would, at leaſt, have the ſatisfaction of knowing to whom the imputation of deviating from truth belonged: his ſuſpicions would be removed: perhaps too his former approbation would be renewed and confirmed. And though the detection of groſs impoſition might give him no pleaſure, though he might not receive any peculiar enjoyment from the incidental proofs which demonſtrate the accuſer (a thing too common) to be the guilty perſon; yet if he ſhould poſſeſs himſelf of the means to vindicate an injured character, as occaſion offered, (though an entire ſtranger to his perſon) the reflection upon ſuch a reward for his pains, would afford him a ſatisfaction, that, if he had any thing of the "milk of human kindneſs" in his compoſition, would amply repay much greater labour, than he could have employed in the courſe of ſuch an enquiry.

Let me add, that if, after ſtrict examination, the accuſed Editor ſhall appear to have diſcharged his taſk, with all the diligence and fidelity, which he declares himſelf to have exerted; however neceſſary commentaries or *notes* may be thought by ſome, appendages to SHAKESPEARE's page; it

it muſt yet be hoped, that other lovers of our poet may be found, who from reſpect to him, will ſet a juſt and high value on that edition, which exhibits his *text* with the greateſt degree of accuracy; though it be "ſerved up to them, for the preſent, without its laudable and accuſtomed "garniture."

Let the ſeveral works then of the gentlemen in queſtion be brought to the teſt of a fair collation. The readers of Mr. CAPELL need be under no apprehenſion for their editor: his work (if we may judge from the ſpecimen, which the preſent enquiry has furniſhed) is calculated to bear a ſtrict examination. And whoever will be at the pains to collate it fairly with that of his competitor Mr. STEVENS, and both with the old copies, muſt allow this obſervation to be juſt; and muſt acknowledge, to whom the preference, in point of fidelity, is to be given: 'Till MR. CAPELL's *notes* appear, in the volumes which he has promiſed, he cannot, on that ground, be brought to a compariſon with his opponent. Though perhaps it may be matter of curioſity, and worth while, to compare them, as far as they go together: I mean in the few notes, which, though intended to be placed at the head of thoſe that are deſigned for each play, MR. CAPELL has yet given us, before their time, in his *Introduction*, that his reader might ſee; (to uſe his own words) "in "what ſort of reading the poor poet himſelf, and his editor after him, have "been unfortunately immerſed." *(f)*

But, to wave this for the preſent, I ſhall firſt give you a full account of the reſult of ſuch a faithful collation as is hinted at above; in which the *ſecond* part of *KING HENRY* the *Sixth* was carefully examined, word by word, in the ſeveral editions of MR. CAPELL and MR. STEVENS, while they were compared together; and both, with the old authentic copies, as well as thoſe of ſome of the modern editors.

In the courſe then of this examination, a diſagreement was found between theſe two gentlemen, in a *hundred* and *ninety-nine* inſtances: They

(f) P. 35.

are

are verbal differences indeed for the moſt part, and ſome of them only orthographical. Though even that, is a circumſtance which ought not perhaps to be overlooked; becauſe denoting the attention of the editor to thoſe originals, which he profeſſes to follow. What other variations there are, and which cannot be comprehended in this claſs;—whether they conſiſt in the arrangement, or metrical diviſion of lines; the poſition of the words which they contain; or their appropriation to thoſe who ſpeak them,—ſhall be exhibited at large, by and by. But firſt let it be obſerved, that out of the number of verbal differences above-mentioned, and which are too many to be here inſerted at length, MR. CAPELL appears to agree in *a hundred and eight*, with the *folio*: the only authentic edition of this play, as allowed on all hands. In the uſe of *twenty-five* others, he is juſtified by the authority of the *quarto*; to which every editor, ſince *Mr. ROWE*, has had recourſe; as to *MS.* authority. Of the remaining ſixty-ſix, *twenty-ſeven* are abſolute *inſertions*, made either by himſelf, or ſome former editor, for the ſake of ſenſe or metre; and they are clearly pointed out, as ſuch, by the *black letter*, in which they are printed, agreeably to his plan: Though he is the only editor who does thus fairly, or conſtantly diſtinguiſh them. *Twenty-five* are alterations of the text, made, like the above-mentioned inſertions, by himſelf or others; unauthorized indeed, but by neceſſity of alteration, yet warranted by their probability; and as conſtantly, as faithfully, noticed; the rejected readings, on which they are founded, being inſerted at the bottom of the page; unleſs where *a note* is refered to upon their account. *Fourteen* then (a number moſt formidable!) remain to be accounted for; and it muſt be confeſſed, that no notice at all is taken of them. But firſt, whether they are of ſuch importance, as to juſtify MR. STEVENS's *charge* of "unnoticed deviations from the old copies," let the following liſt determine, which contains them all.

CAP.	P.	L.	*FOL.* and *STEV.*
1, or	6,	44	——and
2, you	7,	26	——ye
3, goes	9,	6	——went
4, born	10,	23	——borne
5, I. *P.*	16,	20	——*All*

6, ſpiteful

CAP.	P.	L.	*FOL.* and *STEV.*
6, ſpiteful	20,	16	——ſpightfull
7, to	24,	12	——at
8, an	27,	8	——and
9, your	38,	4	——thy
10, as	52,	15	——a
11, a	54,	1	——the
12, that's	79,	28	——there's
13, and	97,	20	——or
14, not	99	25	——no.

But even in the uſe of ſome of theſe, inconſiderable as they are, MR. CAPELL may have followed the authority of the *firſt folio*; or one of the *quartos*. For the *ſecond folio* is the edition, to which I was obliged to have recourſe, and which, though a copy of the former, ſometimes differs from it, we are told, by accident; and the only *quarto* here referred to, is that which MR. STEVENS has publiſhed, under the title of "THE WHOLE CONTENTION between the two famous Houſes LANCASTER and YORKE." *(g)* But MR. CAPELL appears to have had the uſe of *another quarto*, *(h)* neither publiſhed nor collated by MR. STEVENS. It is not improbable therefore, that one or other of thoſe books may juſtify the uſe of ſome of the above readings. *(i)* Becauſe, it appears, as far as the preſent collation could aſcertain it, that MR. CAPELL has moſt faithfully adhered to his plan, as above laid down, and has proceeded throughout with ſo

(g) See twenty of the plays of *Shakeſpeare* publiſhed from the *originals* in *quarto*, 4 vols. 8vo. 1766.

(h) See the *TABLE* of *quartos* ſubjoined to his *introduction*.

(i) *Two* of the above readings, [10 and 14] as I am ſince informed, are found in the *firſt folio*. And, upon a review of the liſt, *four* others [2, 5, 7, 8,] appear to be amendments; and therefore were, probably deſign'd. But let the reader, who turns to them, conſider, whether he would not have been diſpleaſed, rather than otherwiſe, if the compliment of particular notice had been paid to ſuch very minute, and neceſſary corrections. *Two*, of the remainder, [4, 6,] it will be obſerv'd, are merely differences in ſpelling; but, for a reaſon already given, they were not be overlooked. And for the reſt, let us candidly ſuppoſe them what they appear to be, errors of the printer, or tranſcriber; (we know that human care is not capable of preventing ſuch miſtakes) and then the above, formidable liſt, will vaniſh, *tenues ceu fumus in auras*.

much caution, and preciſion, that perhaps he may be cenſured by ſome, for paying too much attention to, what they may may rank among, trifles: Neglect of any kind is certainly not his fault. But ſurely correctneſs is an eſſential quality in an editor; and if "ſetting commas and points exactly "right" contributes at all to the elucidation of the author, or to the eaſe and benefit of the reader, the thanks of both are due to that editor, who carefully attends to ſuch things. It is making a parade of theſe minute ſervices that is ridiculous. But MR. CAPELL is far from being chargeable with parade of this kind. For it muſt be apparent to any one who will be at the pains to examine his work with that of either of the labourers, who have preceded him in the ſame department, that he might have filled volumes with his own praiſe, had he choſen, as they have, on every occaſion, to dilate on ſuch his atchievements. But this, by the by.

MR. STEVENS's charge, of deviating, without notice, from the old copies, being thus far diſproved, let us now ſee whether he is more happy in that, of the arbitrary omiſſion of ſeveral paſſages.

After the words—"Duke *Humphry's* doom," [VOL. 6. p. 22. l. 9. *edit. Capell:*] the *King* adds, as the paſſage ſtands in MR. STEVENS (it ſtands ſo too in *Mr. Warburton*)

Then be it ſo: my Lord of Somerſet,
We make your Grace Lord Regent over the French.

Theſe lines, it is true, are omitted, nor is any notice taken of the omiſſion, by MR. CAPELL. But they do not appear in the *folio*.

After "downright blow," [38, 4. C.] MR. STEVENS reads, after *Mr. Warburton*, as "Bevis of Southamptom fell upon Aſcapart."

Theſe words alſo are not to be found in MR. CAPELL's page; nor are they in that of the *folio*.

After "have at him;" [79, 6. C] *CADE* goes on, according to MR. STEVENS, "is there any more of them that be knights?

"*Mich.*

" *Mich.* Ay, his brother.

" *Cade.* Then kneel down Dick Butcher; [*he kneels*] riſe up Sir Dick " Butcher. Now ſound up drum."

This paſſage appears, as it does here, in *Mr. Warburton*; but MR. CAPELL does not inſert it, and is again juſtified in the omiſſion, by the authority of the *folio*; for no ſuch words are to be found there.

After " child" [36, 23, *C.*] the current editions, and MR. STEVENS among the reſt, with the *folio*, give the following line:

" God and King Henry govern England's realm."

This line alſo, it muſt be confeſſed, MR. CAPELL has entirely omitted; but has referred to a *note*, which is to account for it.

Such is the amount of MR. CAPELL's omiſſions. But what proof do they yield of arbitrary proceeding? They prove indeed who has moſt carefully conſulted, and moſt faithfully followed, the authentic copies. For *three* of the paſſages are formed on the authority of the *folio*; deſerted here without notice by MR. STEVENS himſelf, who allows it nevertheleſs to be the only authentic edition of this play; and for the *fourth*, if you will conſult the paſſage, you will probably ſee the reaſon of the omiſſion; and acknowledge the propriety of leaving out words, which make a mere botch in the place where they are inſerted; ſuch a one as you may rather wonder, former editors had not thought it neceſſary to remove. But however that may be, MR. CAPELL has given fair warning of the omiſſion, the only one that his plan admitted, by reference to a *note*.

The charge of deviating, without notice, from the old copies, though in ſome meaſure conſidered, and diſproved already, remains to be examined, more particularly. For the purpoſe then of ſuch an examination, every difference between MR. CAPELL and MR. STEVENS ſhall be collected, and drawn out at full length, in the following collation; where their ſeveral agreements or diſagreements with the old copies ſhall be alſo marked.

I.—" It

I.—" It is further agreed between them." [5, 9, C.

This paſſage though found in both *folio* and *quarto*, is omitted by Mr. STEVENS; (as it had been by Mr. *Warburton*) yet he gives no notice of the omiſſion.

II.—" That doth accuſe his maſter of high treaſon." [21, 13. C.

This line alſo, which is in the *folio*, as well as Mr. CAPELL, Mr. STEVENS omits. But no notice is taken by him of the omiſſion.

III.— Aſmath, by the eternal God,
Whoſe name and power thou trembleſt at
Anſwer that I aſk.———*Fol.*

Aſmuth, by the eternal God, whoſe name
And power thou trembleſt at, anſwer that I aſk.———*STEV.*

Aſmath,
By the eternal God, whoſe name and power
Thou trembleſt at, anſwer that I ſhall aſk; *CAP.* 23, 22.

" Shall," I preſume, is adopted from the *quarto.* (*j*) For the following paſſage is to be found there.

———" take this ſcrole of paper here,
Wherein is writ the queſtions you ſhall aſke.

IV.—Come, come, my Lords;
Theſe oracles are hardily attain'd,
And hardly underſtood.———*Fol. STEV. WARB.*

Come, come away, my Lords: Theſe oracles
Are hardily attain'd, and hardly underſtood.-----*CAP.* 25, 9.

The *folio* reads 'hardly' in both places. 'Away' is here printed in *black-letter*; and 'hardly' is inſerted at the bottom of the page.

(*j*) 'Shall,' I am informed, is the reading of the *firſt folio.*

V.---Tan-

V.---Tantæne animis cœleſtibus iræ, churchmen ſo hot
Good unkle hide ſuch malice:
With ſuch holineſſe can you doe it?—*Fol.*]

Tantæne animis cæleſtibus iræ?
Churchmen ſo hot? good uncle, hide ſuch malice;
With ſuch holineſs can you do it?----*STEV. WARB.*

Tantæne animis cæleſtibis iræ? Churchmen ſo hot?
Good uncle, hide ſuch malice, with ſuch holineſs,
Can you not do it?-----*CAP.* 26, 21.

" Not" is printed in black letter.

VI.---Gloſt. True, unckle, are ye avis'd?
The eaſt ſide of the grove:
Cardinall; I am with you.----*Fol.*

GLO. True, uncle, are ye avis'd? " The eaſt ſide of the grove?
" Cardinal, I am with you."----*Cap.* 27, 14.

The double inverted comma is appropriated, by Mr. CAPELL, to the purpoſe of pointing out what is to be ſpoken aſide.

Mr. STEVENS following the example of his predeceſſors, Mr. *Theobald* and Mr. *Warburton*, gives the above lines in the following manner.

Glo. True, uncle.
Car. Are you advis'd?---The eaſtſide of the grove.
Glo. Cardinal, I am with you. [*aſide.*

VII. *Glo.* What means this noiſe?
Fellow, what miracle doſt thou proclaim?---*Fol. STEV. WARB.*

GLO. What means this noiſe? Fellow, what miracle
Doſt thou proclaim?---*CAP.* 27, 28.

VIII. Glo. Why that's well ſaid: what colour is my gown of?
Sim. Black, forſooth, coal-black, as jet.---*Fol. STEV. WARB.*

GLO. Why that's well ſaid:
What colour is my gown of?
SIM. Black, forſooth;
Coal black as jet.—*CAP.* 29, 24. *(k)*

IX. Glo. Then Saunder ſit there.
The lyingſt knave in Chriſtendom.
If thou hadſt been born blind,—*Fol.*

Glo. Saunder ſit there, the lyingſt knave in Chriſtendom.
If thou hadſt been born blind,—*STEV. WARB.*

GLO. Then *Saunder*, ſit thou there, the lyingſt knave
in Chriſtendom. If thou hadſt been born blind,—*CAP.* 30, 7.

'Thou,' in the firſt line, is printed in black letter.

X. *Glo.*———
You made in a day, my Lord, whole towns to fly. *Fol. STEV. WARB.*

Glo.———
You, in a day, my Lord, made whole towns fly.—*CAP.* 31, 14.

XI.—was murder'd trait'rouſly. *Fol. STEV.*

trait'rouſly was murther'd. *CAP.* 33, 27.

On occaſion of the firſt of theſe tranſpoſitions we are refered to a *note*. The other, adopted from a former editor, and probably made in conformity to

(k) The reader ſhould have been apprized (tho' it eſcaped the author's memory to give a hint of it before) that with reſpect to theſe caſes of an *improvement purely metrical*, the editor himſelf explains them, (for his punctilious integrity never deſerts him) p. 24 and 29 of the *Introduction*, where a *general notice* only is given of them, and a ſufficient reaſon aſſign'd for avoiding a particular one. By the way the editor is never more judicious than in theſe regulations.

the

the arrangement uſed by the author, in another place, (*l*) is pointed out; and the rejected reading given, as uſual, in the margin.

XII. Marryed Richard Earl of Cambridge,
Who was to Edmund Langley,
Edward the Third's fift ſonnes ſonne. [*Fol.*

Married Richard Earl of Cambridge;
Who was the ſon to Edmond Langley,
Edward the Third's fifth ſon. [*STEV. WARB.*

Marry'd *Richard*, Earl of *Cambridge*; who was ſon
To *Edmond Langley*, *Edward* the Third's fifth ſon. [*CAP.* 34, 14.

'Son,' inſerted in the firſt line, is printed in black letter. The rejected reading, 'ſonnes ſonne' is exhibited in the margin.

XIII. For ſeeing him, I ſee my life in death. [*Fol. STEV. WARB.*

And, ſeeing him, I ſee my death in life. [*CAP.* 60, 21.

This tranſpoſition, which *Dr. Johnſon* approves, is pointed out, as well as the alteration of 'for' to 'and,' according to the uſual method, at the bottom of the page.

XIV. *Lieut.* Poole? Sir Poole? Lord?

This is the reading of the *folio*; which MR. STEVENS follows, as others had before him, changing only '*Lieut.*' to '*Cap.*' MR. CAPELL gives the paſſage thus;

Cap. Yes, *Pole.*
SUFF. Pole?
Cap. Pole? ay *Pole.* [72, 26.

This reading is adopted from the *quarto*, yet the inſertion of the firſt '*Pole*'

(*l*) P. 59. l. 21.

in

in the laſt line, though neceſſary to the metre, being without the authority of an old edition, a reference, to point it out, is made, as uſual, to a *note*.

XV. *Cap.* Hale him away, and let him talk no more;
Come, ſoldiers, ſhew what cruelty ye can.—
Suff. That this my death may never be forgot!—

So theſe lines are appropriated to the ſpeakers, in the *folio*; which MR. STEVENS follows: in MR. CAPELL they are given thus;

Cap. Hale him away, and let him talk no more.
SUFF. Come, ſoldiers ſhew what cruelty ye can,
That this my death, &c. [74, 26.

This change was firſt made by Sir *Thomas Hanmer*; whom *Mr. Warburton* has followed. But, however ſlight the alteration, and however neceſſarily adopted, reference to a *note* ſhews the reader what is done.

XVI. ———come, come, let's fall in with them.
[*Drum, enter Cade, &c.*
Cade. We John Cade, ſo term'd of our ſuppoſed father—
Dick. Or rather of ſtealing a cade of herrings.
Cade. For our enemies ſhall faile before us, inſpired with the ſpirit of putting down Kings, and Princes.—Command ſilence.

Thus are theſe paſſages diſpoſed in the *folio*; which MR. STEVENS follows; as his predeceſſors had done; only altering, with them, 'faile' to 'fall.' MR. CAPELL has taken the liberty to tranſpoſe them, as follows;

——come, come, let's fall in with them: for our enemies ſhall fall before us, inſpired with the ſpirit of putting down Kings and Princes.
[*Drum, enter* DICK *the Butcher*, &c.
CADE. We *John Cade*, ſo term'd of our ſuppoſed father,—
DICK. "Or, rather, of ſtealing a cade of herrings."
CADE. Command ſilence. [76, 15.

But

But, we are refered to a *note* for an account of this change. And the ſlight alteration of 'faile' to 'fall' made ſilently by others, and here only adopted, is alſo duely noticed; for the rejected reading is inſerted in the margin.

I cannot help obſerving, that if ever tranſpoſition was neceſſary, (a liberty which every modern editor of SHAKESPEARE has thought himſelf often obliged to take, in juſtice to his author) it ſeems to be ſo, in the preſent caſe. And there can ſcarce be a doubt, I think, but the words are, by this change, reduced to their proper and original ſituation; becauſe all is now eaſy and clear, which before laboured with awkwardneſs and confuſion.

XVII. As for more words, whoſe greatneſs anſwers words,
Let this my ſword report what ſpeech forbears. [*STEV.*

The *folio* reads, 'as for words;' in other reſpects, as above: in MR. CAPELL, theſe lines ſtand thus;

As for more words,—let this my ſword report,
Whoſe greatneſs anſwers words, what ſpeech forbears. [95, 19.

The example of Sir *Thomas Hanmer* is followed in this change: *Mr. Warburton* has alſo adopted it. But a *note* is referred to, that a proper account of the liberty, which has been taken with the text, may be given to the reader.

The lines that follow are ranged, according to the order in which they ſtand in the *folio*, without any alteration; except in one word, "theſe" for "thee," in the firſt line, adopted from a former editor; and of which the reader is apprized at the bottom of the page: a ſcenical direction is indeed added, for the purpoſe of explanation. Thus then MR. CAPELL reads;

XVIII. *YORK.* Would'ſt have me kneel? firſt let me aſk of theſe
[*pointing to his troops and attendants.*
If they can brook I bow a knee to man.—
Sirrah, call in my ſons to be my bail; [*exit att.*

I know, ere they will let me go to ward,
They'll pawn their ſwords for my enfranchiſement, [100, 9.

Theſe lines, as they are here pointed, and directed to be ſpoken, will probably appear to be ſufficiently intelligible; to ſay nothing of the ſpirit reſtored to them. But *Mr. Warburton*, conſidering them as obſcure, and perplexed, has changed their order, after having made the ſlight alteration above mentioned; for "thee" is the reading of the folio. In his edition therefore they are tranſpoſed as follows;

York.. Sirrah, call in my ſons to be my bail;
Would'ſt have me kneel? firſt, let me aſk of theſe,
If they can brook I bow a knee to man.
I know, &c.

Mr. STEVENS follows the example of his predeceſſor, in this tranſpoſition.

You have now every difference, that I could find, ſubſiſting between our two editors, in the text of this play, fairly laid before you; in which if you ſhould diſcover any miſtake, be aſſured, it is merely accidental; as I am perſuaded, it can be but trivial. For I have taken all the care I could, to prevent every thing of that kind; as I have to avoid wilful miſrepreſentation, (which I abhor, and for which you would abhor me) in the ſmalleſt article. (*m*)

(*m*) Doubt is ſometimes diſarmed by an apparent frankneſs, in refering to vouchers, which if conſulted, would not come up to the point, for which they are appealed to: perhaps would flatly contradict it. The reader will probably recollect inſtances of this practice in writers, and favourite ones too, without particular references, in this place. Perhaps part of the foregoing pages may have proved the exiſtence of this practice. But it is a mode of lying which unleſs touched with a delicate, experienced, and maſterly hand, inſures detection, while it precludes apology. For though doubt ſhould be diſarmed, yet unleſs curioſity too be laid aſleep, the artifice muſt inevitably be expoſed, and the reader enraged at the aſſurance and inſult as much as at the deceit, will be upon his guard againſt all further confidence—"*quære peregrinum*" The reader is requeſted to give curioſity it's full ſcope here; that his own eyes may become witneſſes, for the competency of the vouchers.

Let

Let me then aſk you, if upon a review of the ſeveral particulars here collected, it does not appear to you, (I declare it does to me) that MR. CAPELL has completely performed what he undertook, and manifeſtly exerted a degree of diligence almoſt inconceivable in reviſing his author's text? Does he not appear to have adhered ſcrupulouſly to the authority of the old authentic copies? Has he uſed any liberties, in departing from them, but thoſe which the reſtoration of his author made neceſſary; and which may be juſtified by ſufficient examples? Has he not, upon every ſuch occaſion, given fair notice of all that has been done; whether by himſelf, or others? And can this be ſaid, with truth, of any one elſe? who has been employed in the ſame work? He certainly has done all this, in the moſt explicit manner that his plan allowed, and beyond which (as in ſcenical or metrical improvements) a *particular* notice could not in reaſon be required.

I may alſo aſk you, whether the ſame review does not furniſh ample proof, that the charge, of omitting paſſages, and deviating without notice, from the originals, may juſtly be retorted upon the accuſer? But, to wave every thing of that kind, if it appears to you, that MR. CAPELL is clear of the imputation thrown upon him, every purpoſe of mine is fully anſwered. And, the end of our enquiry being obtained; your doubts, I hope, as well as my own entirely removed; I might here lay down my pen, and relieve both myſelf, and you. This, perhaps, has long been your wiſh. But there is a tireſome ſort of people, (whether I am one of them, you ſhould have known) whom it's very indiſcreet to admit into converſation.; for if once you allow them to begin, they will make you hear the end of their tale, and tho' you ſhew, by the moſt expreſſive and ſignificant geſtures, that you wiſh to ſhake them off, and to be rid of them, all you will get for it will be, what HORACE got upon ſuch an occaſion;

—non ſum piger; uſque ſequar Te.

In ſhort, if I have gone ſo far for your ſatisfaction; though I doubt the road has been a very dull one; and my converſation has not much enlivened it; yet I muſt beg to have your company and patience, a little further. I won't promiſe that you will be much amuſed, by the new objects that will offer them-

themſelves, as we go along; though perhaps their novelty may a little compenſate for my dullneſs in the manner of recommending them to your notice.

Mr. STEVENS has not informed us, (and as I am no motive-monger I ſhall not perplex myſelf with gueſſing,) what might be his motive for conſulting the *ſecond part of HENRY the Sixth*, in preference to every other play in Mr. CAPELL's volumes; and yet as it could not be from any peculiar difficulties attending the reviſal of this play, that he was induced to look towards Mr. CAPELL for aſſiſtance; it can as little be ſuppoſed that he was moved, by any particular eſteem for its excellence, to ſhew it ſuch attention. For though there are ſtrokes in it, which evidently appear to be the work of that great maſter's hand, whoſe name it bears, it is executed upon the whole, in a ſtyle ſo inferior to his other hiſtorical pieces, that more than one of his commentators have doubted, whether it be entirely of his compoſition. The difficulty of reviſal could ſcarce have a greater ſhare, in bringing this obſcure play forward to the light, and procuring it ſuch diſtinction. The *folio* is the only authentic copy of it extant. The *quarto* is little more than a rude ſketch, and though it has many parts which are ſo much the ſame, that paſſages have been judiciouſly ſelected from them, for the emendation of the more perfect work; yet it may be conſidered, upon the whole, as another play. The editor therefore could not be embaraſſed by a multiplicity of various readings. He could not want to diſcover the path, which another had trod before him. There was no occaſion for a clue to direct, where there was no labyrinth to perplex. I ſhould be ſorry to ſuppoſe that an ill purpoſe was to be anſwered by a cenſure, which was therefore to be hazarded at any rate; or that a ſhelter from detection was intended, by an appeal to an obſcure, and inſignificant work; which few would be likely to read at all, and fewer to examine word for word, ſyllable for ſyllable, with no view but that of doing juſtice to an editor's character.

Let us then ſuppoſe that it was mere accident, which threw the volume in this gentleman's way; and that accidentally looking into it, he was drawn on to conſult it, inſenſibly, and without previous deſign. Yet is not it a little wonderful, that his curioſity was not excited, by the diſcovery thus made,

made, to continue the ſearch, when he had another volume in his hand, which contains things more worthy of examination?

He has intimated indeed, that his acquaintance with MR. CAPELL is but ſlight; ſo ſlight, that probably he would not have acknowledged it at all, but had paſſed it by without any kind of notice, if he had not imagined, it might be ſuſpected, from the occaſional agreement of their ſentiments. To uſe his own words; "this circumſtance, [of having conſulted one play, and one "play only, of MR. CAPELL's edition] is mentioned, leſt ſuch accidental "coincidences of opinion, as may be diſcovered hereafter, ſhould be inter-"preted into plagiariſm." Though what is called ſo, (he tells us afterwards) is often no more, than the reſult "of having thought alike on the "ſame ſubject." *(n)*

But what could give occaſion to this fear? Had he looked no farther than the play which he mentions, what would he have known of MR. CAPELL's opinions; or how far his own coincided, or diſagreed with them? This fear then ſeems to evince a greater degree of intercourſe than is acknowledged, and when you are acquainted with, and have conſidered the language held by theſe two gentlemen, the one in his *Introduction*. the other in his *Advertiſement to the Reader*, and his *notes*; you will ſee that they have indeed thought very much alike on the ſame ſubjects: perhaps you may be of opinion, that ſomething of intimacy has ſubſiſted between them; and that the latter is not without obligations to the former; whom he appears to have followed rather cloſely, upon ſome occaſions, not only in opinion, but in practice too.

But plagiariſm is ſo hard a word, and the imputation of it ſo ſorely hurts an author, in his tendereſt part, that I would not willingly faſten it upon any one, merely for having betrayed a ſlight ſymptom of fear, that he might be ſuſpected of it. Such a fear might proceed from an over-delicacy of conſtitution; which ſhould therefore be treated with Anodynes. Yet it is rather curious to obſerve, that *Plagiariſm* is apt to affect an author's ears, as the

(n) Advert. to the reader, p. 8 and 9.

word beginning with a B does thoſe of the nymphs of *Billingſgate*. For albeit their organs are daily and hourly inured, and conſequently inſenſible to any impreſſion from the harſheſt ſounds, yet it has been obſerved, that they never fail to be ſenſibly affected, and to vibrate at once, on the ſlighteſt touch from that little monoſyllable. *Plagiariſm*, in truth, like *accomodate*, to which it ſeems to be ſomewhat of kin, " is a word of exceeding good command;" but it is withal ſo ſubtile, ſo abſtruſe, and ſo equivocal in its modes, that I dare not attempt to define it. How far lawful borrowing extends, and where unlawful plagiariſm begins, I know not. The line that ſeparates them may be too fine for my viſual nerve; and I will not run a riſque of ſtraining it, in ſuch a ſearch.

Thus much has been laid down as a maxim, (you well know) that the *ANCIENTS*, thoſe great *Squires* and *Lords* of PARNASSUS, are fair plunder; and, that it is no plagiariſm to take from them, whatever we want or like. But the commoners, who inhabit the foot of the hill, are bound, by the cuſtom of the manor, to take nothing from each other, without due acknowledgment of the loan. As beggars and pickpockets, who live by cheating, and filching from their ſuperiors, make a conſcience of not ſtealing from one another. Such dealing has ever been conſidered, among them, as a miſdemeanour, and has been puniſhed accordingly. And I ſcarce need remind you of a ſentence once paſſed, in a caſe of that kind, the juſtice of which, though attended with ſeverity, is no leſs manifeſt and ſatisfactory, than the manner in which it is reported is affecting; namely how one *MOORE* was condemned to a loathſome dungeon in the *Dunciad*, where alas! he ſtill lies bound, a ſad warning to all offenders in like ſort, merely for having taken, perhaps by accident, but converted to his own uſe, without acknowledgment, certain goods, the property of *POPE* and *Co.* contrary to the cuſtom of the ſaid manor. However, I am not caſuiſt enough myſelf, and therefore ſhall leave it to you to determine, what ſort of acknowledgment may be ſufficient, in ſuch a caſe, to bar an action. Nor will I hazard my opinion, how far the caſe before us, comes within the cuſtom. But, to enable you to decide, you muſt have evidence laid before you; and facts muſt be clearly aſcertain'd. For this purpoſe, I muſt apply myſelf to

the

the taſk of making extracts, to which I again beg to ſollicit your attention, not doubting that you will conſider them, with as much patience as, impartiality.

Mr. CAPELL giving an account of all former editions of SHAKESPEARE, old as well as new, of the complaints made againſt them, and of the defects, with which they are juſtly chargeable, comes in courſe to *Mr. ROWE*; and tells us; "He put out an edition, which, unhappily is "the baſis of all the other moderns: for this editor went no further than to "the edition neareſt to him in time, which was the folio of 1685, the laſt "and worſt of thoſe impreſſions: this he republiſhed with great exactneſs, "&c."(*o*) Having then taken notice of the ſeveral ſucceeding editors, in their turns, he concludes thus; "The ſuperſtructure cannot be a ſound one, "which is built upon ſo bad a foundation as that work of *Mr. ROWE's*; "which all of them, as we ſee, in ſucceſſion, have yet made their corner "ſtone: The truth is, it was impoſſible that ſuch a beginning ſhould end "better than it has done; the fault was in the ſetting out," &c. (*p*)

Hear now Mr. STEVENS, to the ſame purpoſe: Theſe are his words; "The want of adherence to the old copies which has been complained of, "in the text of every modern republication of Shakeſpeare, is fairly de-"ducible from Mr. Rowe's inattention to one of the firſt duties of an editor. "Mr. Rowe did not print from the earlieſt and moſt correct, but from the "moſt remote and inaccurate of the four folios. Between the years 1623 "and 1685 (the dates of the firſt and laſt) the errors in every play, at leaſt, "were trebled.—It may be added, that as every freſh editor continued to "make the text of his predeceſſor the ground-work of his own, (never col-"lating but where difficulties occurred) ſome deviations from the originals "had been handed down, the number of which are leſſened in the impreſ-"ſion before us, as it has been conſtantly compared with the moſt authen-"tic copies; whether collation was abſolutely neceſſary for the recovery "of ſenſe or not." (*q*)

(*o*) *Introduct.* P. 15, 16.
(*p*) *Ibid.* P. 19.
(*q*) *Advert.* P. 1.

It

It muſt here be obſerved, that MR. CAPELL, leſt it might be thought ſtrange, that he had not mentioned *Dr. JOHNSON's* edition in his account of thoſe which had preceded his own, gives the reader this reaſon for his ſilence; that he had not made, nor could make any uſe of it; his own having been printed, in great part, before that appeared; and that its merits or demerits were unknown to him: yet he adds, that "this he had perceived, "having looked it but ſlightly over, that the text it follows, is that of its "neareſt predeceſſor, *(r)* and from that copy it was printed." *(ſ)*

Perhaps it may appear, notwithſtanding MR. STEVENS's acknowledgment of this defect in the ſeveral works of former modern editors, that it has not been thoroughly repaired, even under his own hands. From the inſtances of agreement with his *predeceſſor's* copy, pointed out in the collation juſt now laid before you, and from the diſagreement, on ſo many occaſions, with the *folio*, which I have alſo mentioned, we muſt conclude, I think, that the "deviations from the originals, handed down from one editor to another, "are not ſo much leſſened, in the impreſſion before us," as they might, and ought to have been; nor do they give a very favourable notion of the care beſtowed by MR. STEVENS on his conſtant examination of authentic copies; though it be one of the "firſt duties of an editor," according to his own declaration, in the cenſure pronounced by him on *Mr. ROWE.*

The ſame ſpecimens may alſo contribute towards determining, who has ſhewn the moſt care and ſkill, in reſtoring the poets numbers to the meaſure, and order, in which he gave them. For this is another material point, too much neglected by former editors; and therefore MR. STEVENS has been particularly attentive to rectify it. "Thoſe ſpeeches (ſays he) which in the "elder editions are printed as proſe, and from their own conſtruction are in-"capable of being compreſſed into verſe, without the aid of ſupplemental

(r) Mr. Warburton.
(ſ) Introduction, P. 18. *note*

ſyllables

ſyllables, are reſtored to proſe again; and the meaſure is divided afreſh in others, " where the maſs of words had been inharmoniouſly ſeparated into lines." *(t)*

MR. CAPELL had likewiſe before obſerved, when he was giving a detail of the errors in the old copies, and the method he had purſued in correcting them; that one great miſtake in the " old editions, and which is very " inſufficiently rectified in any of the moderns, relates to the poet's num- " bers; his verſe being often wrong divided, or printed wholly as proſe, " and his proſe as often printed as verſe." And after lamenting that there is ſtill ſtanding, in SHAKESPEARE's works, " much unpleaſing mixture " of proſaic and metrical dialogue, and ſometimes in places ſeemingly im- " proper; theſe blemiſhes (adds he) are not now to be wiped away;—but " muſt remain as marks of the poet's negligence;—what he manifeſtly in- " tended proſe, (and we can judge of his intentions only from what appears " in the editions that are come down to us) ſhould be printed as proſe, what " verſe as verſe; which, it is hoped, is now done, with an accuracy that " leaves no great room for any further conſiderable improvements in that " way." *(u)*

MR. CAPELL has exhibited *(v)* a liſt of the plays, as they ſtand in the *folio*, chiefly to ſhew, that ſome are there divided into acts, others into acts and ſcenes; and others not divided at all. " Now (ſays he) when theſe " plays were to be divided, as well thoſe of the firſt claſs as thoſe of the " third, the plays of the ſecond were ſtudiouſly attended to; and a rule was " picked out from them, by which to regulate this diviſion: which rule " might eaſily have been diſcovered before; had but any the leaſt pains " been beſtowed upon it; and certainly it was very well worth it, ſince " neither can the repreſentation be managed, nor the order and thread of " the fable be properly conceiv'd by the reader, till this article is adjuſted. " The plays that are come down to us divided, muſt be looked upon as of

(t) Advert. P. 3.
(u) Introduct. P. 28. 29.
(v) Ibid. P. 7.

" the author's own ſettling——his ſcene diviſions he certainly did not fetch " from writers on the drama; for, in them, he obſerves a method in which " perhaps he is ſingular, and he is invariable in the uſe of it: with him, a " change of ſcene implies generally a change of place, though not always; " but always an entire evacuation of it, and a ſucceſſion of new perſons: that " *Liaiſon* of the ſcenes, which JONSON ſeems to have attempted, and upon " which the *French* ſtage prides itſelf, he does not appear to have had any " idea of." *(w)* We are afterwards told, that " the current editions are " divided in ſuch a manner, that nothing like a rule can be collected from " any of them." *(x)*

I had hitherto, I confeſs, taken it into my head, that this diſcovery of a rule, for the regulation of the ſcenical diviſion, was quite new, and entirely MR. CAPELL's own. And notwithſtanding he has modeſtly repreſented it as ſo obvious a matter, he had not the leſs merit, with me; when I conſidered it's importance, and the ſhare it had in elucidating his author, and rendering his edition more perfect than any that had preceded. I took it for granted, in ſhort, that this was one of thoſe improvements that were to " diſtinguiſh " him from thoſe that had gone before." Perhaps I was not entirely miſtaken. For ſo far is true; that this rule had not been diſcovered before; but, it ſeems, it has ſince been diſcovered alſo by MR. STEVENS. Wits will jump! for ſee how exactly MR. STEVENS's account tallys with what MR. CAPELL had before ſaid, of the ſame matter. " The ſcenery, throughout " all the plays, is regulated in conformity to a rule, which the poet, by his " general practice, ſeems to have propoſed to himſelf. Several of his pieces " are come down to us, divided into ſcenes as well as acts. The diviſions " were his own, as they are made on ſettled principles, which would hardly " have been the caſe, had the taſk been executed by the players. A change " of ſcene, with Shakeſpeare, moſt commonly implies a change of place, but " always, an entire evacuation of the ſtage. The cuſtom of diſtinguiſhing " every entrance or exit by a freſh ſcene, was adopted, perhaps very idly, " from the French theatre." *(y)*

(w) Ibid. P. 25.
(x) Ibid. P. 27. *Note.*
(y) Advert. to the Reader, P. 3 and 4.

There

There are other particulars obſerveable in MR. STEVENS *Advertiſement*, —ſuch as what he has remarked of the deſtruction of books and pamphlets, in the courſe of the civil war; of SHAKESPEARE's being but little read, or known; &c. which, beſides what has been here exhibited, might have led a perſon, who was previouſly acquainted with the contents of MR. CAPELL's *Introduction*, to have ſet them down for marks of imitation. And the above extracts might be thought to give ſomething like a proof of liberties taken with an old acquaintance; if MR. STEVENS had not particularly entered his caveat, againſt our ſuſpicion of any ſuch dealings, by aſſuring us, that it is not his way to borrow intentionally from any one. At leaſt, though he has ſubmitted, ſometimes, to borrow, and from various quarters, (and he has acknowledged as much, in general) yet, if he does not own his obligations to an individual, here and there, it is, it ſeems, becauſe his borrowing was a mere matter of accident, or he did not particularly know to whom he was indebted. " It may occaſionally happen, (ſays he) that " ſome of the remarks long ago produced by others may have been offered " again as recent diſcoveries. It is likewiſe abſolutely impoſſible to pro- " nounce with any degree of certainty, whence all the hints, which furniſh " matter for a commentary, have been collected, as they lie ſcattered in many " books and papers, which were probably never read but once, or the par- " ticulars which they contain, receiv'd only in the courſe of common con- " verſation." (z)

Let this ſalvo paſs for as much as it is worth. But ſome perſons, we know, are naturally ſhy of their beſt acquaintances; and are apt to give the greateſt proof of their weakneſs, in that reſpect, when they happen to meet with one of them, to whom they have obligations. Perhaps MR. STEVENS may be ſo unhappy, as to be afflicted with this conſtitutional weakneſs; and if ſo, to expect him to act otherwiſe than in obedience to it, would be to expect an impoſſibility; and that would be cruelty in the extreme. But, notwithſtanding this, why he ſhould not own MR. CAPELL for an acquaintance, if he is ſuch, as well as others whom he has enumerated; or why he ſhould

(z) *Ibid.* P. 9.

be

be more reſerved in acknowledging his debts to him, than to any other; are queſtions which it requires more ingenuity, than I am maſter of, to anſwer ſatisfactorily. MR. CAPELL, as we have ſeen, is an honeſt man; to ſay the leaſt we can of him; one therefore whoſe name would not have diſcredited MR. STEVENS; one alſo whoſe word may be relied on; and whom another may venture to talk after. And, if you want more proof, than you have yet had, of this laſt particular, MR. STEVENS himſelf will furniſh you with it, in abundance; affording at the ſame time, a ſingular inſtance of a memory ſo very retentive, that ſcarce any thing eſcapes it, of what he had but once read, or heard; and, what is more ſingular, ſo very treacherous too, that the perſon from whom the intelligence was derived, ſeems to be as entirely forgot, as if he did not exiſt.

MR. CAPELL has aſſured us, that though other originals of SHAKESPEARE's *fables*, have been pretended, by various people, and at various times, yet that what he has ſaid of thoſe matters, in the notes inſerted in his *Introduction*, "may with all certainty be relied upon." (*aa*) Thither I wiſh now to direct your attention; according to the intimation which I formerly gave you; and you will ſcarce doubt the truth of MR. CAPELL's aſſertion, when you find that MR. STEVENS, by his "accidental coincidences "of opinion," corroborates almoſt every particular which they contain. two men, at a diſtance, without preconcert, or knowledge of each other's thoughts, have advanced the ſame opinions, it will go a good way towards proving theſe opinions to be true, and well founded. But, in ſuch a caſe as we have now to do with, which is little more than giving teſtimony to matters of fact, ſuch agreement ſtrengthens, and eſtabliſhes, beyond a doubt, what each has declared. Now, if you will turn over MR. STEVENS's volumes, you will find the notes to each play regularly headed by one of his introducing, and marked as ſuch, in which we are told from whence the *fable* of the play appears to be borrowed. And there is ſcarce

(*aa*) P. 71.

one

one among them all, in which the happy coincidence abovementioned, may not be diſcerned. I ſhall ſelect a few for example's ſake. And if they are not ſufficient to prove the truth of what I have aſſerted, and to ſatisfy your curioſity, I muſt refer you to the notes at large; where you will find a ſameneſs of matter, with ſeldom any addition, worked up indeed into another form, and ſet off by a new dreſs; but marked with ſuch a lively reſemblance in feature and complection, that it requires no very nice view to diſcern their origin.

Theſe marks are particularly viſible, in the accounts given of the *fables* of *ALL's WELL THAT ENDS WELL:* The *COMEDY* of *ERRORS: CYMBELINE: MEASURE* for *MEASURE: MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING: TITUS ANDRONICUS: TROILUS* and *CRESSIDA:* and the Two *GENTLEMEN* of *VERONA*; not to mention others; *(bb)* and muſt ſtrike,

(bb) To this liſt ſhould be added what Mr. STEVENS has ſaid, on the ſubject of *my old Lad of the Caſtle*; and the *martyrdom of old Caſtle*, alluded to in the epilogue to HEN. 5th, *vid.* notes, on Hen. 4th, 1ſt part, and Hen. 5. p. 8.

It may alſo be obſerved, that the principal matters, of which MR. CAPELL's note on *Lear* is compoſed, may be found diſtributed by MR. STEVENS among his notes, on that play. Mr. Capell tells us, that we are indebted, for SHAKESPEARE's *Lear*, to a ſilly old play, publiſhed in 1605. MR. STEVENS has indeed republiſhed this play; ſo that it would be ſtrange, if he had not attributed SHAKESPEARE's *Lear* to the ſame origin. "But "(MR. CAPELL goes on) who the author of it ſhould be, I cannot ſurmiſe;"——But, whoever he was, SHAKESPEARE has done him the honour to follow him, in a ſtroke or two: one, a circumſtance of ſome beauty——*Leir* and *Cordella* kneeling to each other, and mutually contending which ſhould aſk forgiveneſs. (v. "Lear," p. 100, l. 25.) another, in the ſecond line of the play's concluding ſpeech:

> "Thanks (worthy Mumford) to thee laſt of all,
> Not greeted laſt, 'cauſe thy deſert was ſmall;"

And here is a third; "Knoweſt thou theſe letters?" ſays *Leir* to *Ragan*, (Sign. I. 3 b.) ſhewing her hers and her ſiſter's letters, commanding his death; upon which, ſhe ſnatches at the letters, and tears them: (v. "Lear," p. 111. l. 21.) Another, and that a moſt ſignal one upon one account, occurs at ſignature C. 3 b.

> "But he, the myrrour of mild patience,
> Puts up all wrongs, and never gives reply:"

Perillus ſays this of *Leir*; comprizing therein his character, as drawn by this author: how oppoſite to that which SHAKESPEARE has given him, all know; and yet he has found means to put nearly the ſame words into the very mouth of his *Lear*,—

ſtrike, on the moſt curſory view, as much as in thoſe three, which I ſhall here lay before you, and which I have ſelected as much for brevity's ſake, as on any other account; and have confined myſelf to ſo ſmall a number, becauſe I would have ſome pity on you as well as on myſelf. I could not, in conſcience, ſet before you more extracts than are neceſſary, after ſo many dull pages of that kind, and when, if I may judge from myſelf, you "had as lief I would put rats-bane in your mouth," as cram you with extract. However, take what follows; and I will offer you no more.

No, I will be the pattern of all patience,
I will ſay nothing. (v. p. 58, l. 31.)

———The epiſode of *Gloſter* and his two ſons is taken from the "*Arcadia*:" in which romance there is a chapter thus entitled;——"*The pitifull State, and Story of the* Paphlagonian "*unkinde King, and his kind Sonne, firſt related by the Son, then by the blind Father.*" (Arcadia p. 142, edit. 1590, 4°.") of which epiſode there are no traces in either chronicle, poem, or play, wherein this hiſtory is handled."

Mr. STEVENS likewiſe in his introductory note ſays; "The epiſode of Gloſter and his ſons muſt have been borrowed from Sidney's *Arcadia*, as I have not found the leaſt trace of it in any other work"—and in a note, (p. 471.) he adds; "The reader, who is curious to know how far Shakeſpeare was indebted to the *Arcadia*, will find a chapter entitled,—— "The pitifull State and Storie of the Paphlagonian unkinde King, and his kinde Sonne; "firſt related by the Sonne, then by the blind Father," P. 141. edit. 1590, quarto. STEV.

(P. 316.) *Although our laſt, not leaſt*, &c.

So in the old anonymous play, King Leir ſpeaking to Mumford,

"———— to thee laſt of all;
"Not greeted laſt, 'cauſe thy deſert was ſmall." STEV.

(P. 400) No, *I will be the pattern of all patience,*
I will ſay nothing.

So Perillus, in the old anonymous play, ſpeaking of Leir,

"But he, the myrrour of mild patience,
"Puts up all wrongs, and never gives reply." STEV.

(p. 479.) "Knoweſt thou theſe letters?" ſays Leir to Ragan, in the old anonymous play, when he ſhews her both her own and her ſiſter's letters, which were written to procure his death. Upon which ſhe ſnatches the letters and tears them. STEVENS.

(p. 464) *No, Sir, you muſt not kneel.*] This circumſtance I find in the old play on the ſame ſubject, apparently written by another hand, and publiſhed before any edition of Shakeſpeare's tragedy had made its appearance. As it is always difficult to ſay whether theſe accidental reſemblances proceed from imitation, or a ſimilarity of thinking on the ſame occaſion, I can only point out this to the reader, to whoſe determination I leave the queſtion. STEVENS.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

" A novel (ſays MR. CAPELL) or (rather) paſtoral romance, intitled—" Euphues' *Golden Legacy*" written in a very fantaſtical ſtyle, by Dr. *Thomas* LODGE, and by him firſt publiſhed in the year 1590, in quarto, is the foundation of " *As you like it:*" Beſides the fable, which is pretty exactly followed, the out-lines of certain principal characters may be obſerv'd in the novel; and ſome expreſſions of the noveliſt (few indeed, and of no great moment) ſeem to have taken poſſeſſion of SHAKESPEARE's memory, and from thence crept into the play."

The ſame original has been pointed out by MR. *FARMER* in his " *ESSAY* on the *learning* of SHAKESPEARE;" from whence MR. STEVENS having made an extract, with due acknowledgment to its owner, for the uſe of it, proceeds thus; " Shakeſpeare has followed the fable more " exactly than is his general cuſtom when he is indebted to ſuch worthleſs " originals; and has ſcetched ſome of his principal characters, and borrowed " a few expreſſions from it. His imitations, &c. however, are too inſigni- " ficant to merit tranſcription." STEVENS.

Merry WIVES of WINDSOR.

After mentioning the common traditional ſtory of this play's being compoſed, at the command of *Queen ELIZEBETH*; MR. CAPELL goes on; " SHAKESPEARE, in the conduct of *Falſtaff's* love-adventures, made uſe of ſome incidents in a book that has been mentioned before, *(cc)* call'd " *Il Pecorone*;" they are in the ſecond novel of that book. It is highly probable that this novel is in an old *Engliſh* dreſs ſome where or other; and from thence tranſplanted into a fooliſh book, called—*The Fortunate, the Deceiv'd, and the Unfortunate Lovers*;" printed in 1685, octavo, for *William Whitwood*; where the reader may ſee it, at p. 1. Let me add too, that there is a like ſtory in the " *Piacevoli Notti*," *di* STRAPAROLA, *libro primo*; " *Notte quarta, Favola quarta*; edit. 1567, octavo, *in Vinegia*."

(cc) In the *Note* to the *Merchant* of *Venice*..

" A

" A few of the incidents in this comedy (ſays MR. STEVENS) might " have been taken from ſome old tranſlation of the *Il Pecorone* of Giovanni " Fiorentino. I have lately met with the ſame ſtory, in a very contemp- " tible performance, entitled, " *The Fortunate, the Deceiv'd and the Unfor-* " *tunate Lovers.*" Of this book, as I am told, there are ſeveral impreſ- " ſions; but that in which I read it, was publiſhed in 1634, 4to. A ſome- " thing ſimilar ſtory occurs in the *Piace voli Notti di Straparola*, Nott. 4 â " Fav. 4 â" STEV.

ROMEO and *JULIET.*

" This very affecting ſtory (ſays Mr. CAPELL) is a true one; it made a " great noiſe at the time it happened, and was ſoon taken up by poets and " novel writers. BANDELLO has one; it is the ninth of tome the ſecond; " and there is another, and much better, left us by ſome anonymous writer; " of which I have an edition, printed in 1553 at *Venice*, one year before " BANDELLO, which yet was not the firſt. Some ſmall time after, " *Pierre* BOISTEAU, a *French* Writer, put out one upon the ſame ſubject, " taken from theſe *Italians*, but much alter'd and enlarged; this novel, to- " gether with five others of BOISTEAU's penning, BELLEFOREST " took; and they now ſtand at the beginning of his " *Hiſtoires Tragiques*," " edition before-mentioned. *(dd)* But it had ſome prior edition; which fall- " into the hands of a countryman of ours, he converted it into a poem; al- " tering and adding many things to it of his own, and publiſhed it in 1562, " without a name, in a ſmall octavo volume, printed by *Richard Tottil*; and " this poem, which is call'd—" *The tragical hiſtorie of* Romeus *and* Juliet," " is the origin of SHAKESPEARE's play: who not only follows it even " minutely in the conduct of his fable, and that in thoſe places where it dif- " fers from the other writers; but has alſo borrowed from it ſome few " thoughts and expreſſions. At the end of a ſmall poetical miſcellany, pub-

(dd) 1564. *vid.* note to *Hamlet.*

" liſhed

" liſhed by one *George* TURBERVILLE in 1570, there is a poem—" on " the death of Maiſter *Arthur* BROOKE, drownde in paſſing to *Newhaven*," " in which it appears, that this gentleman (who, it is likely, was a military " man) was the writer of Romeus *and* Juliet." In the ſecond tome of " *The Palace of Pleaſure*, (Nov. 25) there is a proſe tranſlation of BOIS- " TEAU's novel; but SHAKESPEARE made no uſe of it."

" The ſtory on which this play is founded, is ſaid to have been a true " one. It was originally publiſhed by an anonymous Italian novelliſt in " 1549 at Venice, and again in 1553 at the ſame place. The firſt edition " of Bandello's work appeared a year later than the laſt of theſe already men- " tioned. Pierre Boiſteau copied it, with alterations and additions. Belle- " foreſt adopted it in the firſt volume of his collection 1596; but very pro- " bably ſome edition of it, yet more ancient, had found its way abroad; as " in this improved ſtate it was tranſlated into Engliſh and publiſhed in an " octavo volume 1562, but without a name. On this occaſion it appears " in the form of a poem, entitled, *The Tragicall Hiſtorie of Romeus and Juliet.* " The laſt mentioned of theſe pieces our author has ſo minutely followed, " that he has occaſionally borrowed even ſentiments and expreſſions. The " ſame ſtory is found in *the Palace of Pleaſure*; but Shakeſpeare does not ſeem " to have been at all indebted to ſuch a faint idea of it, as is convey'd by " Painter's Epitome, &c." STEVENS.

What ſhall we now ſay to theſe things? one might almoſt be tempted to imagine, ſome extraordinary compliment was intended to be convey'd, by the more delicate method of indirect inſinuation, to the perſon ſo cloſely followed; as a recompence for the injuſtice, that might be found to attend the blame rather haſtily thrown on him; and which a more cloſe examination might have prevented.

But, to be ſerious, let me aſk you; do theſe things prove acquaintance? are they marks of imitation? is there any borrowing here? could all this be done, by any one, without knowing what was done? is any acknowledgment due, and ought it to have been paid, in this caſe, or not? Theſe and

other queſtions of a ſimilar kind, I leave you to anſwer; and to make your remarks accordingly. Here is fair ground to work upon; but I forbear.—

Indeed our view of things hitherto has been ſuch, as to raiſe a juſt ſuſpicion of MR. STEVENS's merits; and to induce one to believe, that the event would not be very favourable, to his credit, were we to indulge our curioſity, thus raiſed, and to examine his work throughout. But that muſt remain for ſome one, who has more time, and abilities, as well as inclination for ſuch a taſk, than I have. I go no farther than as he had pointed out the way; by ſeeming to ſolicit a compariſon of himſelf with MR. CAPELL. Be then the merits of his work what they may. I ſhall not ſtep out of my road, on ſo invidious an errand, as to ſeek for occaſion to depreciate them. Let him have improved the edition which he undertook to reviſe: he has availed himſelf of ſome late ingenious publications, and has been favoured too, it ſeems, with the private communications of the learned, for the ſame purpoſe: let him have illuſtrated his author by paſſages collected from contemporary or other writers; let the notes and obſervations, which he has added, have removed difficulties, cleared obſcurities, and diſplayed beauties: Let the excellencies of his edition, and his own merits, be never ſo various and determined; he would not, I conceive, have diminiſhed the one, nor derogated from the other; though he had vouchſafed to acknowledge openly, the aſſiſtance which he had derived from a gentleman, whoſe honeſt zeal, unremitted labour, and effectual ſervices in the cauſe of SHAKESPEARE, entitled him to a quite different treatment, from that which he has received. But be theſe things as they may; from what I have ſeen of this performance, by dipping up and down in it, I have diſcovered no reaſon to lay MR. CAPELL's book aſide; or to believe a better has been offered us. On the contrary, my opinion of its value is become higher from compariſon, and more ſtrongly confirmed than ever. I had long thought that gentleman far ſuperior to every other editor of SHAKESPEARE, having frequently compared him, in parts at leaſt of all the moſt celebrated plays, with the beſt of his predeceſſors; and I cannot but continue of the ſame opinion, nothwithſtanding what has been ſince done by his ſucceſſor MR. STEVENS.

If

If then we have found his work anſwering the expectation which he had taught us to form of it, in the parts that we have examined; and which malevolence had pointed out, with a view to ſtigmatize them as defective; it is but juſtice, to give him credit for the reſt. If he has paid ſuch attention to the inferior parts, we cannot reaſonably ſuppoſe, that the more important have been neglected. And, for what he has ſtill in reſerve, we have the ſame ground to hope, we ſhall not be diſappointed. We are well warranted to expect great things from him; who has done great things already. We have ſeen a ſufficient ſpecimen of the fullneſs and accuracy, with which his body of *various readings* is to be collected, in what he has long ago ſubjoined to the play of *EDWARD the Third*, publiſhed in the *Proluſions*. We know, from what ſources, his *notes*, and *ſchool* are to be derived; and, if he had not himſelf given us convincing proofs, of the extenſiveneſs of his reſearches, *Mr. FARMER* has long ſince told us, (and who would deſire better authority) that MR. CAPELL, whom he ſtyles his "communicative friend," is the moſt able of all men, to give information, in matters that reſpect literary antiquity; and that "the lovers of *Shakeſpeare*, will, ſome time or other, "owe great obligations to that curious and intelligent gentleman." *(ee)*

I hope you have long ſince acquitted him of all unfairneſs, and arbitrary proceeding, in his edition of SHAKESPEARE. But to form a proper judgment of his merits, you muſt be well acquainted with his work. And I will venture to aſſure you, that the more you are acquainted with it, the more you will admire it: eſpecially, when you have compared it with others. You will then ſee what diligence he has exerted, in the examination of the oldeſt and moſt authentic copies; what judgment he has ſhewn in ſelecting from them the beſt materials they afford, towards bringing his author to due perfection, as well as in the uſe of what his modern predeceſſors have produced, for the ſame purpoſe; whoſe corrections he has adopted, only as neceſſity required, with as much prudent reſerve, on the one hand, as candour and impartiality, on the other: you will obſerve eminent inſtances of his critical ſagacity, in diſcovering, and removing errors, which after every for-

(ee) ESSAY on the *Learning* of *SHAKESPEARE*, p. 57 and 59. 2d edit.

mer

mer attempt, ſtill remained to be cleared away; as well as in diſcerning and reſtoring the truth, where it had been almoſt totally expunged: and you cannot but remark his faithfulneſs, in pointing out, to the minuteſt tittle, every alteration in the text, which ſuch reparations, however neceſſary, have occaſioned. If we take into this account, his care and ſkill in regulating the Poets numbers; and in reducing the arrangement of *Acts* and *Scenes* to juſt order; his exactneſs, in marking every change in the place of action, together with the propriety and ſagacity of his ſcenical directions: If we attend to the nicety, and accuracy of his pointing; which, by the help of ſome improvements, of his own invention, is rendered ſo perfect, and effectual, throughout, that, (to uſe his own words) *(ff)* "they "who run may read, and that with profit and underſtanding:" If we add, that, by his ſingular attention to this article alone, numberleſs paſſages are now firſt adjuſted; their true ſenſe aſcertained; and their beauty placed in a juſt light; and that, however great the improvements ariſing from hence, they are all paſſed over in ſilence, without the parade which the reader was peſter'd with before, (and his attention drawn, at every turn, from the Poet, to his more inportant editor.) If we conſider the ſeveral particulars, which we have briefly thrown together, we ſhall perceive that the great out-lines which form Mr. CAPELL's character, as an Editor, are complete and upon a cloſer inſpection, you will allow, that, in this ſcetch no feature is exaggerated; and that I have not, in any inſtance, "o'erſtep'd the modeſty" of truth. In a word, if Diligence, if Sagacity, Judgement, Accuracy, Fidelity, Modeſty and Candour, are the qualities, which conſtitute the character of a good Editor, we muſt acknowledge, that Mr. CAPELL, may juſtly claim it as his own; and that, in each of theſe reſpects, he is intitled to the higheſt praiſe. His merits are as extraordinary, as they are various. And if any thing be ſtill wanting to fill up their meaſure, it muſt be what I have not yet ſeen an example of; ſomething, I muſt confeſs, altogether beyond the reach of my imagination.

"This Fellow's of exceeding honeſty.
"And knows all qualities, with a learned ſpirit,
"Of SHAKESPEARE's dealings.

(ff) Introduct. P. 28.

Upon

Upon the whole, I cannot but think every lover of SHAKESPEARE owes great obligation, already, to Mr. CAPELL; for his endeavours, to furniſh them with a perfect Edition, of their favourite, and moſt valuable poet. And, for my own part, ſince I have been cut off by my courſe of life and ſituation from the high privilege which you enjoy, of hearing and ſeeing, on the Stage, the great *viva voce* Interpreter of SHAKESPEARE, Mr. CAPELL is become to me an *alter ROSCIUS:* his page ſupplies the want of voice and action; and I think myſelf as much indebted to him, for my conception of SHAKESPEARE's excellencies,—yes, and that SHAKESPEARE is as much indebted to him, (may I hazard the declaration?) as to MR. GARRICK himſelf.

After ſuch a declaration, you will ſcarce wonder, that I ſhould be drawn to expreſs my gratitude to him, even in numbers. The ſtory of *Midas's Queen* is "ſomething muſty," otherwiſe, I would quote her Majeſty's example, with due reference to chapter, and verſe, to juſtify myſelf, for having whiſpered ſome time ago, to a blank page of MR. CAPELL's book, my thanks for what he had done; for a work which indeed I had long wiſhed to ſee; but, from the repeated failures in the attempt, had almoſt deſpaired of ever ſeeing brought to ſuch perfection. Had the "gods made me poetical," MR. CAPELL's praiſes might have been ſung in more exalted, and more worthy ſtrains. But, I truſt, that he has "received from the candid and "judicious, both the approof and the applauſe," which he ſo well deſerves: His merits are certainly, ſuch as do not ſtand in need of the poetaſter's aſſiſtance to give them fame.

Vi propriâ nituntur, opiſque haud indiga noſtræ.

If then, at taking leave of MR. CAPELL and you, I ſubjoin the following little ſonnet; believe me, it is merely in teſtimony of the opinion, which I had long ago conceived, of that gentleman's labours; and of the thanks, which were due to him, for them. And, in confidence, that you will be juſt enough to take in good part, what you have, in great meaſure, brought

upon yourſelf; and ſo candid, as to overlook every defect of your friend, in what is well meant, I will not add to the length of my letter, already much too long, by uſeleſs and impertinent apologies, for doing what I might have left undone: they would ſcarce atone for tedioufneſs; or give a reliſh to inſipidity: they would neither diminiſh my faults, nor contribute to your amuſement. Without farther ceremony, I am yours, &c.

SONNET

To Mr. CAPELL.

CAPELL! that ſpirit of heaven is taught, whoſe care
Supplies the wiſhes of the virtuous dead,
The untimely-parted; who with pious aid,
Frees the ſad ghoſt, from wand'ring in deſpair.
Thus taught, thus minded, did thy zeal repair,
The wond'rous pile, that SHAKESPEARE's magic rear'd;
By daring impudence with filth beſmear'd,
And folly's daubing foul, though ſeeming fair.

Great was thy toil! be thine well-earn'd th' acclaim,
And praiſe of all, who make the muſe their care!
Friend, guardian, juſt and faithful, ſhall thy name
With thine own bard, that brighteſt heir of fame,
In ſacred union live: what praiſe more dear,
What meed more glorious can thy labours claim!

Poſtcript.

Poſtcript.

AFTER what has been ſaid above, of the expectation formed of Mr. CAPELL's notes, it would be unjuſt to omit this opportunity of declaring, how entirely it has been anſwered by their publication. They were publiſhed, towards the latter end of the ſpring, after this letter was written. And the writer of it is now tempted, by gratitude, to give his opinion, that they contain whatever can be reaſonably expected in a comment; while they afford freſh proof of their author's poſſeſſing thoſe good qualities, which have already been mentioned, as contributing to form the character of a conſummate editor.

He has confined himſelf chiefly in them to the explanation of difficulties, and to a fair account of all that has been done, towards clearing his author's text from the various errors, which have been tranſmitted with it. Yet he has occaſionally interſperſed, with ſuch criticiſms, as were neceſſary, much curious matter, that renders intelligible and familiar, what otherwiſe would be imperfectly reliſhed, or underſtood by thoſe, who are not deeply verſed in the hiſtory of SHAKESPEARE's time, and of the ſtage, for which he wrote. As doing juſtice to his author appears to be the object which he has chiefly in view, his aim is to ſupply his reader with ſuch aſſiſtance, and information as may ſatisfy that purpoſe, rather than to diſplay his own erudition, or ingenuity. He has not retailed the miſtaken opinions of former commentators, merely to confute them; nor ſhewn, in how many different ways a paſſage has been miſunderſtood; as if that were always neceſſary to the honor of a ſound interpretation. Where former debates have at laſt ended in the diſcovery of truth; he has contented himſelf with preſerving ſo much as may eſtabliſh it, and prevent future miſtakes, in the ſame caſe, conſigning the reſt to oblivion, as nugatory, and of no farther uſe. He has alſo happily rejected that illiberal ſpirit and behaviour, by which commentators, and particularly thoſe, whom it has been SHAKESPEARE's doom to aſſign him, have as often diſgraced themſelves, as they have diſguſted the

reader, magnifying and exalting their own performances, without modeſty, and inſulting over the attempts of others, without candour.

He has robbed no one of that praiſe which is due to him, by appropriating to himſelf another's right, without acknowledgment; but whatever he owes to thoſe who have preceded him, is fairly aſcribed to its proper owner. And his own claims, whenever they appear, are urged with a delicacy and diffidence which are no mean arguments of ſuperior merit.

His collection of various readings afford continued evidence of his diligence, accuracy, and integrity.

In ſhort, he has not "defeated by negligence, any expectations of correct-"neſs which he may have raiſed." On the contrary, his attention to his author is manifeſt, throughout his work: particularly in one material point, which, having been too much neglected, or not ſufficiently underſtood by former editors, ſhall be here taken notice of. That point is nothing leſs than the repreſentation of the drama. But by keeping it conſtantly in view, that what SHAKESPEARE wrote was intended to be acted; he has not only ſhown his own intimate knowledge of the ſtage, but has reſcued from obſcurity, and happily illuſtrated many capital beauties in paſſages, which, for want of the ſame view, have not a little perplexed the moſt ingenious of his predeceſſors. Let it alſo be obſerved, that, in detaching his notes from the text, he has followed the example of the moſt celebrated editors, and has ſhewn us too, at laſt, that SHAKESPEARE may be read, by himſelf: a circumſtance the more worthy of our notice, becauſe we are enabled by it to follow the advice with eaſe, which a learned editor of our poet has given his readers, requeſting them rather earneſtly, "if they deſire to feel the higheſt pleaſure that the drama can give, to read "every play of SHAKESPEARE, with utter negligence of all his com-"mentators."† But ſuch an attempt muſt be attended with no little difficulty, when we are, every minute, liable to interruption; and where our attention is called off perpetually from its proper object.

But

* See Dr. Johnſon's preface.

But of this enough; let Mr. Capell's work ſpeak for itſelf, I wont preſume any farther to enforce its claim to the attention of every reader of SHAKESPEARE, and to the approbation of every liberal and judicious mind. And yet,

——————" 'twere a concealment
" Worſe than a theft, no leſs than a traducement,
" To hide his doings; and to ſilence that,
" Which, to the ſpire and top of praiſes vouch'd,
" Would ſeem but modeſt."

Mr. CAPELL has ſhewn, in the courſe of his notes, to whom every emendation belongs, which he has admitted into his author's text; and it is therefore obvious, that a compariſon of Mr. STEVENS's work, with thoſe notes, muſt alſo ſhew, how far that gentleman coincides with Mr. CAPELL, in ſuch particulars, as appear to be of *his* introducing.

I have made ſuch an enquiry; which was neceſſarily confined to nine plays; (Mr. CAPELL's notes having as yet extended no farther) and with the reſult, voucher by voucher, the reader ſhall be made acquainted on a future occaſion, when the remainder of the notes will be publiſhed.----Their coincidence, in conjectural emendations, will not be found ſo frequent, as might have been expected, from Mr. STEVENS's fear of incurring the imputation of plagiariſm. So that, if his fear had any relation to this particular, it was greater perhaps than the occaſion required. But, as he knew nothing of ſuch matters, from himſelf, *having conſulted only one* of Mr. CAPELL's plays, it is probable, that he had been too much alarmed by the officiouſneſs of ſome perſon, who had communicated his remarks, on that point, with exaggeration: perhaps, by that anonymous friend, who is ſometimes mentioned in his notes, as having now and then ſuggeſted an emendation to him; which, it is obſervable, Mr. CAPELL alſo has happened to hit upon.

But

There are other matters, obſerved in the courſe of comparing the works of our two editors together, in which their coincidence is more frequent, and remarkable: particularly in the regulation of the ſcene diviſion; which is ſo entirely the ſame, throughout the nine plays above alluded to, "*that it was needleſs to examine any farther*;" ſufficient proof ariſing from hence, that the rule by which theſe editors have proceeded muſt be right; their *accidental* coincidence affording a ſtrong argument in favour of it's truth; and, at the ſame time time, doing honour to the diſcernment which produced ſuch a diſcovery. The proceedings of others, who have taken their own indigeſted conceptions for their guide, in this matter, are reducible to no ſuch rule; nor is any ſuch ſimilitude to be found among them; unleſs where they confeſſedly follow one another.

But the editors, with whom we are at preſent concerned, coincide entirely; not only in the application of their rule to thoſe plays which the author left undivided, but alſo, in their deviations from the diviſion, in others, which has the ſanction of the moſt authentic copies, for it's ſupport.

The inſtances of their agreement, in other matters are as numerous, as they are remarkable: they agree perfectly in marking the general, and particular places of action; and giving other ſcenical directions; and in the regulations of the poet's numbers, in places where the old editions have exhibited his verſe, entirely as proſe, as well as where they have broken it into irregular lines; which indeed have ſometimes been reduced to regularity by other modern editors; but in a different manner. The article of pointing too muſt be mentioned, among the reſt, when the ſenſe of a paſſage is materially affected by it; and, by ſuch means, is placed in a different light from that, in which it had appeared before.

MR. STEVENS has been told by a learned correſpondent, "that his edition approaches nearer to perfection than any that has "yet appeared." Should this compliment be well founded; yet if the

if the perfection of his edition may be ſuppoſed to conſiſt in thoſe particulars, which he himſelf has pointed out to his readers, as what chiefly contributed to its excellence, and thoſe are, the reduction of the ſcenical diviſion to order, and the regulation of the metre,——it is evident, from what has been juſt now obſerved, that MR. CAPELL has an equal, and indeed a prior, claim to whatever merit ariſes from thence. And, if it ſhould be added, "that the right of the firſt claimant alone ſtands without diſpute; and that the ſecond can only prove his pretenſions to himſelf;" it would be merely to repeat a maxim of *Dr. Johnſon's*, which is as true in general, as his particular application of it is candid. *(x)* But the particulars of theſe and many other coincidences, which an inſpection of the notes of both editors have enabled me to diſcover, ſhall be reſerved for another work.

CONCLUSION.

The public have been long in poſſeſſion of the marks of imitation; and it has been generally allowed, that they are defined with all that accuracy and preciſion which characterize the writings of the conſummate critic, to whom we are indebted for them, One is therefore no longer at a loſs to aſcertain the reality of a diſguiſed imitation; and direct borrowing is evident of itſelf: yet it ſeems to be a very favorite opinion of MR. STEVENS, "that it's "always difficult to ſay what proceeds from imitation, and what from ſimi-"larity of thinking upon the ſame ſubject." But I will confidently appeal to any intelligent and diſintereſted reader, whether "mere ſimilarity of "thinking upon the ſame ſubject" will in any degree account for the pointed and various inſtances of reſemblance laid before him in the courſe of this work.

The reader muſt not ſuppoſe that MR. STEVENS conſulted MR. CAPELL in the paſſages of *his* work which are by ſome hidden magic found alſo in the work of MR. STEVENS, for that ſuppoſition would contradict the aſſertion of MR. STEVENS already mentioned. And if he ſhou d be at all

* See his Preface.

backward to admit the power of *coincidence* in the latitude that MR. STEVENS has given to it; he muſt be deſired to recollect, that men are ſometimes endowed with ſingular faculties, for which there's no accounting; though we cannot deny the exiſtence of what is viſible in its effects. For inſtance, we remember the man with his two voices, which he could throw at any time into other people's mouths, and ſpeak in all appearance from *them*: and there is a Derviſe upon record, in the Arabian Tales, who goes even beyond this. He could diſpoſe of his ſoul as our countryman could of his voice, and by *transfuſing* it into the body of any given perſon, he could poſſeſs himſelf of his peculiar modes of thinking, his knowledge and his opinions. It's only to ſuppoſe the faculty of *coincidence* to be of this nature, and that idea will remove all difficulties, and reconcile the moſt untoward appearances to MR. STEVENS's aſſertion.

Copying it certainly is, in theſe caſes, from the very nature of the ſubject, whether the paſſage retains the identical words or the arrangement of them in which it was firſt conceived and clothed, or aſſumes a new air.

And if then, after all, MR. CAPELL be in the general opinion, as he is in mine, the ſole inventor and proprietor of the ſeveral hints or notices, directions, comments, diſcoveries, &c. &c. in which MR. STEVENS agrees with him; what ſhall we ſay of this conduct of MR. STEVENS?—He has reſigned to bare poſſibilities, to the obſtinacy and diligence of an enthuſiaſt, for the editor whom *he* proſcribes, (an enthuſiaſt not likely to be found) the detection of a moſt cruel injury; and at the moment (is it poſſible?) that he is reprobating that editor as guilty of impoſition and falſehood, (offences which *he* commits in the charge,) diſavowing every obligation to him, or even acquaintance with him, (except in a ſingle inſtance,) is borrowing from him ſecretly note after note, and aſſuming to himſelf *his* merit. That is not all; he has done over and over again the very thing which he falſely lays to the charge of the other.

Sure,

Sure, it's in a manner providential, or at leaſt a very ſingular piece of good fortune, to the intereſt of truth and juſtice, that ſuch diſingenuity has been expoſed: you were convinced early, from your obſervations upon the nature of the charge, as applied to ſuch an editor as MR. CAPELL, and upon that ſuſpicious and dark reference to a *whole* play, not likely to be examined, (inſtead of a paſſage or two, marked by the page and the line,) that the accuſed editor was innocent—you were prophetic; and yet many a reader has upon the ſingle and hardy aſſertion of this accuſer, neglected MR. CAPELL; and (which is very curious) admired MR. STEVENS to MR. CAPELL's prejudice, for the diligence and ſagacity of MR. CAPELL's notes, read in MR. STEVENS's work. We have often agreed (and I owe ſome glaring proofs of it to your information) that cunning, employed, as it generally is, for the purpoſes of envy, or malevolence, has a fatal weakneſs that clings to it, and in the end betrays it: you go ſo far as to ſee a *moral* uſe in the diſcovery before us; by which it appears to demonſtration, that the charge is falſe; that the accuſer has profited by the editor whom he diſowns, and affects to deſpiſe; and that he is condemned by his own teſt as guilty of the very miſconduct in his character of editor, which he had imputed to another; a miſconduct, of which, perhaps, he would not have been convicted, if he had not added to it the ſin of accuſing the moſt exemplary innocence and worth. The effect has been, to be ſure, a ſort of poetical juſtice; for MR. CAPELL, ſo depreciated and traduced, has, without a ſingle effort of his own pen, perhaps without knowledge of the injury, found a zealous champion, whoſe diligence, (his only merit) has enabled him to ſhew the *accuſer* and the *accuſed* in their true colours, and whoſe only wiſh and intereſt it is to reſcue an injured name from calumny, as well as to make the admirers of *Shakeſpeare* fairly acquainted with his beſt, his *only* editor's merit.——

Let every reader, of common honeſty, and of common ſenſe, pronounce upon the *charge*, upon its *falſehood*, and upon the *end* for which it was calculated

culated; and let him give a *name* to ſuch dealings in any other affair of life, public, or private; he muſt at leaſt allow that wilful and malicious falſehood is as deteſtable as it's unpardonable upon all occaſions; that it's a mark of the baſeſt mind; and that it would receive a very inadequate ſhare of the odium which ought to attend it, if it were ſtigmatized in terms of cenſure as forcible as any that language can ſupply.

F I N I S.

20 AP 70

ERRATA.

ADVERTISEMENT, page ii. l. 21, might thought—read—might be thought

LETTER, page 2, l. 25, STEVENS—MR. STEVENS

p. 6, l. 31, appendages—as appendages

p. 9, note (*i*) l. 7, be overlooked—to be overlooked

p. 28, l. 21, two men—When two men

p. 31, l. 20, ELIZEBETH—ELIZABETH

p. 32, l. 7, Piace voli—Piacevoli

p. 36, l. 1, diſcerning—diſcerning, and

SONNET, l. 2, virtuous—worthy